

The following is an excerpt from the book **PENNSYLVANIA ARCHIVES.**

It outlines how the newly formed (now) American government went through the process of creating a country. They knew they had to disavow the Crown and swear allegiance to the new country; however because the country was not yet fully formed. The initial oaths were first to the independent States in which they lived and secondly to the United States of America.

http://www.archive.org/stream/pennsylvaniaser203harruoft/pennsylvaniaser203harruoft_djvu.txt

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NAMES OF PERSONS WHO TOOK THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE STATE OF
PENNSYLVANIA BETWEEN THE YEARS 1776 AND 1794

HISTORICAL NOTE.

As early as May, 1776, the Continental Congress declared that it was " irreconcilable to reason and good conscience that the American people should take the oaths for the support of government under the crown of Great Britain," and that it was ""necessary that every kind of authority under the crown should be suppressed." The struggle which ensued between those in the Proprietary interest, represented principally by the members of the Assembly, and the Whigs of the Revolution, was bitter, but the plan of the latter for the calling of a Convention was finally successful.

At a conference of the committees of observation for the different counties held at Carpenter's Hall's on the 18th of June, 1776, it was resolved that it "was necessary to call a Provincial Convention to form a new government in the authority of the people only, and the following religious test was proposed to the members thereof;

"I, _____, do profess in God the Father and in Jesus Christ His Eternal Son, the true God. and in the Holy Spirit one God blessed evermore, and do acknowledge the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration."

Notwithstanding the spirit of intolerance which actuated the adoption of this oath, immediate efforts were taken for a proper representation of every county in the State. The Convention met on the 15th of July, the members without hesitancy taking the prescribed test, and during its session it not only discussed and perfected the measures necessary in the adoption of a Constitution, but assumed the supreme authority in the State, and legislated upon matters foreign to the object for which it was convened. Among other matters this body appointed a Council of Safety, to carry on the executive duties of the government, approved of the Declaration of Independence, and appointed justices of the peace who were required before assuming their functions to each take an oath of renunciation of the authority of George III, and one of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania. The old Assembly which had adjourned on the 14th of June to meet on the 14th of August, could not obtain a quorum, and adjourned again to the 23d of September. It then interposed a feeble remonstrance against the invasion of its prerogatives by the Convention, but it was a dying protest. *"The Declaration of Independence had given the old State Government a mortal blow, and it soon expired without a sigh thus ending forever the proprietary and royal authority in Pennsylvania."* (WESTCOTT.)

The Constitution of 1776 went into immediate operation on its adoption, the 28th of September. The oath prescribed for members of Assembly was as objectionable as that required to be taken by the members of the Convention, and political disputes waged warm and bitter. The refusal of the State Navy Board, referred to in the minutes of that body, to take the oath of allegiance to the State, tended to increase the excitement, and this, with the disarrangement of the associators, required the adoption of more stringent measures.

The Legislature, by a general militia law, passed June 13, 1777, not only made full provision for the enrolment of all persons fit for military duty, but established a test and oath of allegiance, a measure highly necessary to restrain the insolence of the Tories. The preamble and oath are in these words:

"WHEREAS, From sordid or mercenary motives, or other causes inconsistent with the happiness of a free and independent people, sundry persons have or may yet be induced to withhold their service and Allegiance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a free and independent State, as declared by Congress :

"AND WHEREAS, Sundry other persons in their several capacities have, at the risk of their lives and fortunes, or both, rendered great and eminent services in defense and support of the said independence, and may yet continue to do the same, and as both these sorts of persons remain at this time mixed, and in some measure undistinguished from each other, and the disaffected deriving undeserved service from the faithful and well affected :

"AND WHEREAS, Allegiance and protection are reciprocal, and those who will not bear the former are not nor ought to be entitled to the benefits of the latter:

"Therefore it is enacted, etc., That all white male inhabitants of the State, except of the counties of Bedford and Westmoreland, above the age of eighteen years, shall, before the 1st day of the ensuing July, and in the excepted counties before the 1st day of August, take and subscribe before some justice of the peace an oath in the following form:

We, the subscribers, do swear (or affirm) that we renounce and refuse all allegiance to George the Third, King of Great Britain, his heirs and successor, and that we will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a free and independent State, and that we will not at any time do, or cause to be done, any matter or thing that will be prejudicial or injurious to the freedom and independence thereof, as declared by Congress, and also that we will discover and make known to some one justice of the peace of the said State, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which we now know or hereafter shall know to be formed against this or any of the United States of America.

This is the ultimate version of the Oath that was taken by our ancestor.

Severe penalties were imposed by this law on all who neglected or refused to take the oath. Many of the names which follow are those who took an active and prominent part in the revolutionary contest and as a part of the history of that famous era, the record is worth preserving. It embraces but a small proportion, however, of the people of the State.

<p>Notes: The religious 'test' was dispensed with in 1790. The list that includes our forefather also includes names (foreign born) of persons who took the oath after that period.</p>
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(Johann)Valentine Rees took this form of oath of allegiance (pg 10) on June 27, 1777.